Contact

30th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Vol. 31 No. 3

Inside this issue:

Thirty years—wow!

By Shailja Verma

Thirty years. My, how time has flown!

When I came to Canada, I was just 16 years old. My mother was to take up a position with Carleton University, but due to funding problems and postal strikes was never informed that the position no longer existed. So here she was with three children aged 16, 14, and 11, a single parent and no job.

Times were interesting in 1970-71. There were very few supports or materials available to assist in the settlement process of newcomers, whether or not they spoke English.

We were lucky because we were all fluent in English; consequently, language was not a barrier. However, imagine our shock when we arrived from New Delhi, India, a very busy cosmopolitan and populated capital, to Ottawa!

I remember asking my mother on more than one occasion what she had been thinking when she decided to bring us to this godforsaken land of snow and ice with no life in it!

Ottawa was so small and quiet; life ended at 6 p.m. and the streets were dead. There were no ethnic restaurants, with the exception of a few Canadian-Chinese and Italian ones; one could not even buy yogurt!

ESL has been part of my life for as long as I have lived in Canada. My mother Margaret Verma was one of the first individuals to work in ESL in Ottawa. At the time, ESL was funded through the Ministry of Culture and Recreation and offered in churches and community centres.

As global conflict grew, more and more refugees and newcomers from non-

Shailja Verma

English speaking nations began arriving in Canada and the face of the country started to change significantly.

TESL Ontario was born in the early 1970s, and soon after came the first edition of *Contact* in 1973.

Initially, *Contact* was produced more in the form of a newsletter. It provided a hands-on approach for teachers who were working with adult ESL learners, when very few materials for the classroom were available.

I began my career in ESL in 1975 and as a young, green teacher was always excited and grateful to receive my mailing of *Contact*.

Thirty years later *Contact* has evolved from a newsletter to a journal that provides more than just classroom techniques and, in keeping with the age of technology, is now available on-line to TESL members.

Thirty years!

Valuable information on cultures and languages is provided through the submissions and hard work of its contributors, who offer insights for teachers and prepare them for the diversity that they face in the classroom.

Contact has become a venue for sharing not only information on learners' needs but a mechanism that allows members to witness the work that this professional association has done and continues to do on their behalf.

As always, TESL Ontario, through articles in *Contact*, has kept the membership abreast of changes, from government policies to new initiatives in the field. As TESL Ontario grew so did *Contact* and the articles continue to be both pertinent and timely.

The number of volunteer hours that have gone into sustaining this valuable journal are too numerous to count, but what a profession to be a part of.

Congratulations, TESL Ontario, for the marvellous work you have done as an organization that started with nothing and built a profession.

I continue to await eagerly the latest issues of Contact. As Tina Turner says, "You're Simply the Best."

Shailja Verma has developed and delivered English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to serve new Canadians. She co-chaired the National Working Group for the Development of Canadian Language Benchmarks, served on the board of TESL Ontario for 13 years in different positions, including President, and is currently President of TESL Canada. •

> *"Contact has become a venue for sharing not only information on learners' needs but a mechanism that allows for members to witness the work that this professional association has done and continues to do on their behalf."*

Contact us

Contact welcomes articles of general interest to association members, including announcements, reports, articles, calls for papers and news items.

Contributors should include their full name, title and affiliation. Text should be e-mailed to: teslontario@telus.net

or mailed on CD to:

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Deadlines are January 30, April 30 and June 30.

TESL Ontario's phone numbers are: (416) 593-4243, Fax (416) 593- 0164. The website is at: http://www.teslontario.org

Inquiries regarding membership or change of address should be addressed to the TESL Ontario Membership Coordinator at teslmembership@telus.net

Inquiries regarding advertising rates and reservation of advertising space should be addressed to the Office Coordinator at teslontario@telus.net.

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Introduction to the 30th anniversary issue

From the Editors

We are pleased to offer you the 30th anniversary issue of *Contact*, TESL Ontario's Newsletter that has become our professional development magazine.

Since its first issue *Contact* has evolved to meet the needs of its readers and the demands of our organization and profession. Begun as a primarily classroom-oriented publication when very little support was available for teachers in the field, *Contact* has expanded to include research articles, book reviews, special features and volunteer organizations.

In recent years, a special Research Symposium Issue of *Contact* has been produced. Under the guidance of a number of dedicated editors, *Contact* has come to be an important voice in the field of ESL in Ontario.

In this 30th anniversary issue, we pay tribute to Brigid Kelso who, after 10 years of dedicated service, is leaving as the Editor of *Contact*. At the same time, we welcome Clayton Graves as our new Editor.

In the spirit of the 30th anniversary issue, a number of contributors reflect on different issues in TESL over the last thirty years.

- **Shailja Verma** describes the beginnings of ESL in Ottawa and the role that her mother Margaret played in establishing TESL in the region.

- In her article, **Roberta Rodenhizer** provides us with a brief history of the TESL Hamilton-Wentworth Affiliate, clearly demonstrating how small beginnings can lead to big successes.

- In their contribution, **Laura Stoutenberg and Kathryn Brillinger** identify two important issues facing TESL Ontario - providing in-service training for instructors who need to prepare internationally-educated professionals for the workforce and who need to prepare immigrants for the ever changing Canadian society.

- **Robert Courchêne** looks at the role that methods have played in L2 teaching as he focuses on what we have learned from 30 years of experimentation. He also reviews Naomi Schaefer Riley's book *God on the Quad*.

- **Tom Farrell and Janna Fox** develop their reflections to raise issues of importance for all members of our profession.

- **Tom Farrell**, in "The Future for TESL Ontario", calls upon all language teachers to become reflective teachers, to go beyond being preoccupied with their "bag of tricks" and to ask fundamental questions about the how, what and why of their teaching. He suggests three simple but effective techniques teachers can use to monitor their classroom teaching.

- In her article, "Looking Back Looking Forward", **Janna Fox** outlines briefly the development of TESL as a profession over the past 30 years, both through the lens of her own journey and the writings in professional journals. In writing this brief history, she identifies the successes, the problems and the future challenges facing our profession.

- **Julia Macdonald** describes a study that she conducted to determine how different ways of correcting grammar errors in writing influenced how her students accepted responsibility for correcting their grammar errors. For each section of her three-part study, she describes her findings and provides an analysis of the students' reactions to the different techniques used.

- As part of the ongoing series on schools with a special vocation for ESL students, **Cathy Haghighat** presents an overview of Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute, in Toronto, along with its two feeder schools --Valley Park Middle School and Thorncliffe Park Elementary School.

- At TESL Ontario's Annual Conference, the membership was presented with the slate of four new officers nominated for the upcoming year as well as the Financial Statements for the past year.

We would like to thank TESL Ontario for giving us the opportunity to serve as interim editors for this 30th anniversary issue. The experience has been rewarding both professionally and personally.

-Robert Courchêne and Hedy McGarrell
Interim Editors

Robert Courchêne

Hedy McGarrell

"Under the guidance of a number of dedicated editors, Contact has come to be an important voice in the field of ESL in Ontario."

A tribute to Brigid Kelso/Introducing Clayton Graves

By Robert Courchêne

For the last ten years, Brigid Kelso has been the Editor of Contact, our professional development magazine.

In browsing through the issues over that ten-year period, I was surprised to discover the number of changes that she introduced both in terms of form and content.

Under Brigid's direction and hard work, Contact published feature articles on organizations that play an important role in the lives of new immigrants, on the different religious faiths and how their beliefs impact their followers' attitudes towards education and social interaction, on language profiles developed by Cathy Haghighat, on schools that play a special role in the lives of ESL students and on the different affiliates that make up TESL Ontario.

She has also worked with the guest editors to publish the five Research Symposium Issues with articles that are widely used by both researchers and practitioners. In terms of format, Contact, has become an online publication accessible to all. Brigid's use of new layout features and colour has also made Contact a more pleasant read for all. Her most important contribution has been providing the members of TESL Ontario with a professional development magazine filled with interesting theoretical and practical articles related to all aspects of our profession.

From research articles on grammar to the use of newspapers in the classroom to teaching in Asia to the use of technology in teaching, Contact has kept us informed of the latest developments in our field. For this we owe Brigid a great debt.

On a more personal note, I have had the privilege of working with Brigid for the last seven years. During that time she has become a friend and trusted colleague. I am certainly aware of all the hard work that she put into editing Contact: gathering articles at the last minute, conducting interviews, struggling to learn how to put it on line, endlessly reviewing manuscripts (many of which she rewrote when reviewers said they should be returned to sender).

As you move on to new challenges, Brigid, I would like to thank you personally and on behalf of TESL Ontario for all the time, energy and inspiration you devoted to making Contact a stimulating and relevant publication. We all wish you success.

With our next issue of Contact, we introduce our new editor, Clayton Graves.

Currently with the e-learning division of TVOntario, Clayton comes to us with broad experience in ESL teaching and materials development.

He worked as a Senior Editor at Nelson Thomson Publishers for many years and as a program author for Language Arts textbook series with Nelson. He has presented conference workshops on language development, reading and writing in all the provinces of Canada.

Clayton is a graduate of Queen's University in Kingston and did his M.Ed. at the University of Toronto in curriculum and language development. He received his ESL Specialist Certificate from the Ministry of Education in 1993. He has taught English at the high school and college levels as well as in adult education for many years.

His interests include reading, classical music, winter sports (especially curling), documentary writing, and online delivery of educational programs. He enjoys working with writers of all interests and levels of experience and invites you to submit articles, stories, reports, and even themes and ideas for stories you would like to see in Contact.

Clayton especially welcomes stories on topics that call for special attention in ESL, or about exciting things that are happening in your class and your area of Ontario.

We hope that you like the new, fresh look of Contact, our professional journal. Join us in wishing Clayton success as the new editor. •

> *"Brigid's most important contribution has been providing the members of TESL Ontario with a professional development magazine filled with interesting theoretical and practical articles related to all aspects of our profession."*

Celebrating 25 years: affiliate profile of TESL Hamilton-Wentworth

By Roberta Feltrin Rodenhizer

At the end of the 1970s a dedicated group of ESL teachers who worked at Mohawk College in Hamilton believed that it would benefit both ESL teachers and their students if they became more active at the local level in their profession.

As a result of this decision, in the fall of 1979 Anna Gris wrote a letter to our provincial association requesting affiliate status, which was subsequently granted in 1980. Jim Jones was elected the first president of TESL Hamilton-Wentworth, and Anna Gris the first recording secretary. Jim later became president of both TESL Ontario and TESL Canada.

The TESL Hamilton-Wentworth Affiliate has a long history of helping immigrants and refugees to become settled. For example, in 1980 some of our affiliate's early members began the Circle of Friends in response to the needs of the Vietnamese refugees arriving at that time.

The Centre was unique in that it was located where most of the refugees lived, at 155 Queen Street North. Elizabeth Sadler was the first director of the Centre that still exists today. In recognition of her efforts on behalf of ESL newcomers to Canada and her ongoing contribution to the field of TESL, Elizabeth received the first Teacher's Award given by our affiliate in 2003.

During the early years the affiliate's activity consisted mostly of informal gatherings and the occasional workshop. With the continued influx of immigrants in the 80's, however, our membership grew. Largely because of Pierre Trudeau and the federal government's multiculturalism policy, ESL instruction was introduced into the elementary and secondary schools.

Betty Penton and Pat Loney, who both taught at Scott Park High School, were assigned ESL classes and were the first high school teachers to join the TESL Hamilton-Wentworth executive.

When Betty passed away a few years later, our affiliate remembered her dedication to her ESL students, and in 1990, a fund was set up in Betty Penton's memory. Until Scott Park closed, a dictionary or gift certificate was awarded at the fall convocation ceremony to a Scott Park ESL student who, through hard work, had made exceptional progress.

In the mid 1980s, our affiliate became more active in providing professional development for the teachers in the area. Numerous workshops have been offered since then. In March 1990 the affiliate's first mini-conference was organized. Keynote speakers at this conference have included Rabbi Bernard Baskin, writer and distinguished member of our community, and Dr. Virginia Sauvé, author and educational consultant from Alberta.

Our yearly conference still provides a varied selection of interesting workshops and publishers' displays. For the last two years our conference has been hosted by St. Charles Mountain Centre, with well over 100 participants in attendance each year. Besides organizing conferences and AGMs, the executive is responsible for publishing a newsletter three times each year.

Currently, TESL Hamilton-Wentworth has over 160 members who work for a number of institutions in the Hamilton area: the Hamilton Board of Education, Mohawk College, St. Charles Adult Education Centres, St. Joseph's Immigrant Women as well as other private and publicly funded organizations.

Our members are involved in delivering a variety of programs including LINC, international education, workplace training programs, college preparation courses, and exam preparation courses. The majority of our teachers now have TESL Ontario certificates. Our volunteer executive has also grown throughout the years. It currently comprises individuals from the various sectors who are dedicated to helping their members network with each other and to keeping them informed of the latest advances in our field.

Despite the often uncertain work situations of many of our members, our affiliate has continued to grow. As we have from the very beginning, we continue to value our profession and to work for the benefit of our ESL students. •

"The Centre was unique in that it was located where most of the refugees lived..."

Teaching and learning ESL in Ontario: making a living and making a life

By Laura Stoutenburg and Kathryn Brillinger

From our perspective as teacher trainers in a TESL Certificate program, we would like to explore two broad areas that may provide fruitful directions for TESL Ontario in the future. The first concerns employment issues for new Canadians and the second relates to the continued positive impact of the ESL community on the social fabric of Canada.

First, as practicing ESL teachers we are keenly aware of those highly trained internationally-educated workers who are prevented from using their skills in Ontario, partly due to a need for additional language training.

With ongoing changes in Canadian immigration policies, the need for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in higher-level ESL is becoming the reality of 21st century language teaching. Consequently, teachers in Ontario need to develop skills and qualifications that are both broadly based and open to specialization in order to continue to contribute in this new environment.

TESL Ontario must help teachers to meet these challenges by providing a framework in which increasing expertise in ESP is both recognized and encouraged.

Second, we have an opportunity as language teaching professionals to continually renew the vision of what is possible for Canada and have this vision reflected in both the design and delivery of ESL teacher training and development. In addition, we have a responsibility as teachers to promote intercultural awareness both in the classroom and in society.

New Canadians have a right to know the norms and expectations that will open doors of power and influence for them in their new social and workplace settings. Similarly, teachers and ESL students alike have both the right and the responsibility to share their own cultural realities and thus participate in challenging those norms, helping to create new and equitable cultural realities. For this to happen, teachers must become ethnographers together with their students. Culture must be explored rather than taught, even while norms such as workplace expectations are demystified for newcomers from different cultures.

What can TESL Ontario do to help ESL teachers better prepare ESL learners to make their contribution to Canada and realize their dreams?

1. Continue to develop positive and practical relationships with funders at all levels so that we can find out, prepare for, and provide input into those funding decisions that affect our learners and our livelihoods.

2. Maintain high standards for certification as such standards are crucial to ensuring that teachers are prepared for emerging needs in language training.

3. Continue a strong emphasis on professional development that looks at skills-based language training and that informs the membership of trends in employment for new Canadians and the implications of those trends for us as language teachers.

4. Encourage new, innovative approaches to provide in-service teachers with more in-depth professional development than one-off workshops can provide.

5. Be proactively involved in the development of flexible ESL programming to meet the needs of highly skilled immigrants who deserve the opportunity to use their expertise in a meaningful way in Canada.

6. Renew the emphasis in teacher training and development on the processes of needs assessment and curriculum development to enhance TESL Ontario teachers' ability to deliver highly specialized, flexible, and goal-oriented programs.

7. Revitalize discussions in ESL classrooms, in ESL teacher training settings and in TESL Ontario forums about the

Laura Stoutenburg

Kathryn Brillinger

Coming to *Contact* in February, 2006

Brighten up your winter with the February 2006 issue of Contact.

We'll take you on a tour of the highlights from the 100-plus sessions given at the Fall 2005 Conference in Toronto.

- Catch up on current ESL research. Learn about new classroom materials. Discover some innovative instructional techniques.

- Reflect on important issues. Extend your professional reading.

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Puppet making combines artistic creativity, performance and literature—three elements guaranteed to stimulate expressive language.

The internet is chock full of FREE resources for ESL — if you know how and where to look.

Teaching and learning ESL in Ontario: making a living and making a life

meaning of multiculturalism in Canada so that our students and we are ready to contribute our voices to discussions about the kind of Canada we want.

8. Continue to encourage an equitable, multicultural focus in teacher training programs.

9. Encourage non-native speaker ESL teachers to share their concerns and perspectives both in the workplace and through TESL Ontario.

Our first focus will help provide our students and us with a means of making a living in the near future. The second will help us all ensure that Canada is a place worth living in for generations to come.

Laura Stoutenburg teaches and develops curriculum in EAP and Workplace English pro-grams in the Kitchener area. Laura's current interests include the training and guidance of mentor teachers, particularly in teaching practicum situations. She has an MA from Providence Seminary in Manitoba and is TESL Certificate Program Coordinator at Conestoga College.

Kathryn Brillinger has taught ESL/LINC for 20 years. She is particularly interested in issues related to foreign-trained professionals and pronunciation. She has an M.Ed (TESL) from Brock University and is currently an ESL teacher and TESL Certificate Program Instructor at Conestoga College. Kathryn is also President of TESL WW. •

> *"We have a responsibility as teachers to promote intercultural awareness in the classroom and in society."*

Reflections on the role of methods in L2 Teaching

By Robert Courchêne

Announcing the direct-Army-Audio-audio-lingual-audio-visual-notional-functional-notional-notional-functional-communicative-natural-total physical re-sponse-Maxwell gesture-structural-eclectic-integrated-thematic-community language teaching-Lozanov-Silent Way -early-mid-late immersion-thematic-whole-language-language experience method coming to a L2 classroom near you!

Over the last 30 years, teachers have been fed a steady diet of methods, each promising to be more effective and more efficient, to be able to overcome the weaknesses of the previous one in helping students acquire their second language. In the process, teachers have been asked to assume the role of course dispenser, drill sergeant, classroom facilitator, coach, co-learner to mention only a few.

Having lived through all these changes, the critical question for me as a language teacher/teacher trainer is, "What have we learned about the how of L2 teaching methodology?"

When I look at other areas, such as computer software programs and surgery, where "knowing how" plays an important role, progress or perfecting of the 'know how' seems to have followed a more linear, build-on-previous-successes-and-failures trajectory.

With computer programs, each new version incorporates the best elements of the previous one and adds new possibilities that offer the user a more efficient and effective program for accomplishing an ever-widening range of tasks. There are always glitches, problems to work out, but once this has been done, the operating system and software offer the user an improved product.

Similarly, when we look at how techniques for performing surgery have developed, enormous progress has been made in areas such as organ transplants, heart surgery and radiation by analyzing perceived failures systematically and then exploiting the insights gained.

Success builds on success.

If we compare how methodology has evolved in L2 teaching with those mentioned above, I believe there are some iden-tifiable differences:

- **A change in method has not always been a guarantee of progress**. Using the new method did not necessarily transform practitioners into better L2 instructors or students into better learn-ers. The new methodology, however, did offer teachers more and better op-tions in presenting the content, and for the learner, improved possibilities in "how to learn". To be fair with our com-parison, it must be stated that the inter-action between computer program and user and surgeon and patient is not the same as that between language teacher and learner, the learner part of L2 teaching dyad having a much more ac-tive role than the patient/learner in the other two dyads.

- **New methods did not necessarily build on the strengths of the previous one(s)**. In some cases, the previous method was completely rejected: e.g., Tyrell and Krashen's Natural Method vs. the behavioural-based audio-lingual methods. While admitting that the A-L method had its weaknesses, rejecting it often led teachers to sacrifice both the strengths and the weaknesses contrary to the examples above.

- **The pendulum-approach to methodol-ogy militated against the develop-ment of an integrated methodology based on sound theory and best prac-tices.** As is often the case in method wars, (e.g., phonics vs. whole language) the strong proponents of a given method maintain that adopting their method automatically means excluding the 'Other', thereby eliminating the possibility of developing a more com-prehensive or inclusive method based on lessons learned. (Whole language,

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Reflections on the role of methods in L2 Teaching

according to its adherents, is a philosophy, not a method.)

- **The context-driven nature of L2 teaching makes it difficult, if not impossible, to use any given method in all contexts.** The communicative method such as it is used in North America does not transfer well to e.g., in many Asian contexts with their large classes, an emphasis on the receptive skills, the use of the intensive method and the shortage of highly fluent teachers. We have learned that the one-size-fits-all does not fit!

- **The human factor in teaching also militates against the implementation of any methodology in its "pure form"** (this is also the case with computer users and surgeons but often to a lesser extent). Teachers interpret, filter, adapt; rare is the teacher who when given a book will follow the methodology and teach the content without any modification.

As language teachers, are we condemned to be forever reinventing the wheel, to be constantly rediscovering insights from the past that we had abandoned along the way?

Is there no hope that one day we will develop a truly integrated teaching methodology or is our future one of reflective eclectics?

I believe that in the last decade, we have seen a trend towards developing a more reasoned approach to the teaching of language with an honest attempt to integrate research and practice.

As with reading theory, we have come to realize that neither a bottom-up (detail) nor a top-down (global) methodology will work. We have concluded that neither form-focused nor meaning-focused methods can stand alone. We need to integrate them to achieve greater success.

Looking towards the future, I believe our hope is not in trying to invent the perfect method but rather in examining the theory and practice of the long list of methods that appears at the beginning of this reflection to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each, and then to use the results of this exercise to help identify areas of research and practice that show promise in helping us improve the teaching of L2.

Robert Courchêne is an ESL teacher/teacher trainer attached to the Second Language Institute at the University of Ottawa. His research interests include evaluation, multicultural and antiracism education, and classroom practice. •

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The Future for TESL Ontario:

Moving beyond the "bag of tricks approach" with Reflective Practice

By Thomas S.C. Farrell

Last November I had the honour and privilege of delivering the Saturday lunch plenary at the 2004 TESL Ontario Conference, "Language for Life."

This was my first conference presentation in Canada since I had arrived in July 2004 after teaching for the previous 24 years in various countries in Asia and having attended and presented in many conferences in Asia, Europe and the US. For some reason, I had never considered presenting in Canada.

So, I was very curious what I would find and my only reference point was Canadian researchers and teachers I had met during my teaching career. Canada's reputation in research in "hardcore" applied linguistics is solid, especially in bilingualism, immersion programs and certain aspects of second language acquisition research. I was also familiar with the TESL Canada Journal and have been impressed with the quality of articles that have appeared in it over the years.

However, I was not familiar with the workings of TESL Canada or its affiliates within Canada such as TESL Ontario and had no idea what to expect when I arrived in Toronto for the conference on November 23rd, 2004.

When I saw all the ESL teachers (1000 plus) gathered on the first day, I was greatly impressed and I automatically began to compare this conference with many of the conferences outside Canada I had attended in the past.

When I say compare, I have specific issues that interest me when I attend conferences: the topics presented, the presentations themselves and the book exhibits. I will briefly address these interests in terms of my perceptions of the TESL Ontario conference.

First, TESL Ontario, to me, is teachers rather than a cold organization. I saw energy in the lobby of the Holiday Inn on King Street, Toronto. So many teachers with an eager look in their eyes buzzing around looking for a presentation to attend.

As I was beginning to get caught up in the excitement, I decided to attend some of the presentations as well, two days before my own presentation.

From the presentations I attended and from scanning the program, the first thing that struck me was the practicality of the topics in that they suggested that they could be easily understood and even implemented immediately in any classroom.

This was fine, but what worried me was that there was not much effort at extracting theory from the activities that were presented. What would teachers do for example, if the activity did not work in their classes the following week? Why can't teachers come up with their own activities based on their understanding of theory of their practice rather than wait to be told from someone else at a conference such as the one I was at?

In order for them to be able to do this, I realized that they would have to examine their conception of practice. I did not see much of this happening at the conference.

For example, Freeman and Richards (1993) have suggested a tripartite classification of conceptions that language teachers can use as a way of examining their conceptions of practice:

- science/research conceptions in which a teacher's conceptions of language teaching are derived solely from research and experimentation;

- theory/philosophy conceptions of language teaching which are based on what ought to work or what is morally right;

- art/craft conceptions of language teaching which are based on an individual teacher's skill and personality and not on the form of teaching.

I wondered if the many participants at these energized presentations were uncritically accepting the activities/methods/suggestions presented, without seeking to understand where they originated from and how these activities fit into their overall conception of language teaching.

I, for one, tend to follow the tenets of the art/craft conception of language teaching in that I think that each teacher

Thomas S.C. Farrell

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Moving beyond the "bag of tricks approach" with Reflective Practice

must take responsibility for knowing what is available from all approaches to language teaching, but should not commit to a single form of instruction.

I was also greatly impressed with the professionalism, energy and passion of each presentation I attended. Each presenter really believed in what he or she was presenting and that it would "work".

However, I was not impressed with the publishers' book exhibits because this seemed to mirror the topics of the presentations in that they were exclusively related to "how to" books, with lots of teacher manuals so that the teacher did not even have to think about his or her own approach: just follow the manual and everything will be fine. I did not see one book related to the theory of applied linguistics or TESL.

This was disappointing and I mentioned as much in my plenary on the Saturday as my topic was on reflective practice for language teachers and how to move beyond a "bag of tricks" approach to teaching ESL.

Yes, this introduction has been leading up to stating what I think ESL teachers as members of TESL Ontario should consider in terms of their professional development in future years.

I will not address where I think TESL Ontario as an organization should go; rather, my message is for the individual member teacher of ESL within TESL Ontario.

I now turn to outlining specific activities teachers can adapt for their professional development so that they can critically reflect on the classroom activities they hold near and dear so that TESL Ontario can further develop as an organization with professionally aware members.

Professional Development

First, it is a fact that language teachers cannot hope to learn all they must know in any teacher education program.

Language teachers may discover that no matter what level their current qualification (certificate, undergraduate degree or graduate degree), due to the constant changes that take place in technology, curriculum, teaching methods, and new array of new theories that continue to emerge each year in the field (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

For example, Richards and Farrell (2005) have suggested that individual language teachers must consider developments in subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical expertise, understanding of learners and curriculum and materials. They further point out that language teachers must also think about their career advancement and become self-aware by developing knowledge of themselves as teachers: their principles and values, and their areas of strength and weakness.

How are language teachers supposed to keep up with all these developments and changes and remain competent teachers throughout their careers so that they can provide the best possible education for their students?

One answer I propose is that language teachers in Ontario and elsewhere must continuously reflect on their practice and use the information from these reflections to make informed decisions about their teaching (Farrell, 2004a, b).

I propose that by reflecting on their practice, language teachers can become more self-aware and this increased level of self-awareness can yield more knowledge about the theory behind their practice (see also Ramani, 1987).

Surely it is most important for language teachers to know where they are at present before they can consider where they want to go or where the so-called experts would have them go.

From what I saw at my first TESL Ontario conference in 2004, not many ESL teachers were:

(a) able to describe professionally what they are doing and more importantly,

(b) why they are doing it, beyond comments using words that indicate instinct rather than systematic and professional reflection: "I feel..." "I think ..."

I did not hear: "I do this activity because it comes from x-theory, and I have researched its impact on my students by

"Surely it is most important for language teachers to know where they are at present before they can consider where they want to go "

Moving beyond the "bag of tricks approach" with Reflective Practice

making recordings (audio and/or video) of my classes, transcribing portions of the recording to yield concrete data about my class (rather than "thinking and feelings"), and I used the information from this data to inform my decision about the activity—whether to modify my practice or not."

In the remainder of this article I will briefly discuss what I mean by reflective practice and outline three activities (there are many more) professional ESL teacher can engage in to become more aware of current practice.

At this stage teachers are probably saying that they do not have time for this because of the 20 to 25 hours of class time that the program they work in demands.

Time is always a precious commodity and administrators are very good at filling teachers' time up; some even consider that teachers are wasting time if they are not actually teaching.

In fact, it is my view that many ESL teachers are treated like machines, talking machines, or writing machines who must be engaged with students all the time because this is how their schools make money.

I would also suggest that some schools do not consider their ESL teachers as true professionals because most professionals in most occupations get time to upgrade their skills. This may not be an option in a school where administrators think that anyone who speaks English can teach it.

If teachers are able to talk professionally about their practice, not in terms of feelings but in concrete terms, then this may begin the process of gaining recognition as the true professionals they really are. However, to be able to talk about their practice, they must first systematically reflect on what they do as teachers.

When they have looked inside their classrooms, they can then start to look outside at the school and organization in which they work—Why this book? Who sets the curriculum and why? Who determines teachers' pay and working conditions and why?

This is the only way of getting recognition for the wonderful job that teachers do; a step in the right direction towards professional status on par with medicine and law.

Reflective Practice

In the discipline of Language Education, teachers of English as a second language (ESL) have been encouraged to reflect on their practice (Farrell 2004a, b; Richards and Farrell, 2005; Richards & Lockhard, 1993).

This is because, as Richards and Lockhard (1993) have pointed out, much of what happens in second language teaching remains "unknown to the teacher" (p. 3) regardless of their years of teaching experience.

This level of unawareness can lead to self-defeating behaviour while teaching. In fact, many experienced language teachers may have been following routines in their teaching for so many years that they are unaware of what is happening in their language classrooms in terms of creating (or blocking) opportunities for learning (Farrell, 2004 a, b).

For example, there may be inconsistencies between their espoused theories about teaching and learning and their actual classroom practices or their theories-in-use (Farrell, 2004a).

Reflective practice generally means that experienced teachers subject their beliefs (usually held at the tacit level) and practices about teaching and learning to a critical analysis so that they can take more responsibility for their classroom actions (Farrell, 2004a).

However, reflective practice does not take place readily or automatically in language teachers' daily lives as it goes beyond mere thoughts before, during and/or after class (Richards & Farrell, 2005). For true reflective practice to happen, opportunities must be created for teachers to engage in systematic reflection as a means of understanding their work (Farrell, 2004a).

Systematic reflection entails encouraging teachers to gather data about their classes, analyze and interpret this data and use the information from this data to guide their future decisions about teaching.

"Some schools do not consider their ESL teachers as true professionals because most professionals in most occupations get time to upgrade their skills..."

Moving beyond the "bag of tricks approach" with Reflective Practice

I consider reflection to be in practice in the classroom when a teacher seeks answers to what he or she is doing in the classroom (method), why he or she is doing this (reason), what the result was, and if the teacher is going to change anything based on the information gathered (justification).

To answer such questions, language teachers must be able to gather data about their teaching.

I suggest three methods of gathering data to enable teachers to become reflective practitioners:

1. Keeping a teaching journal

Teaching journals are an excellent tool for self-monitoring (Farrell, 2004a), and are simple to create and maintain.

Teachers can write journals at any time of the working day (although I usually like to write a journal after a class or a significant event in case I might forget what happened).

Teachers can "talk to themselves" in their journal by recording doubts, frustrations, joys and any other aspects of their lesson that were significant to them.

In fact, regular writing in a teaching journal can also be very cathartic, especially if the journal is used to let off steam about some frustrations encountered during the teaching day.

After regular journal writing teachers can examine the entries for patterns. For example, are they commenting on one or two similar issues all the time?

If this is the case, then it is possible that these issues are very significant for the teacher and may need more in-depth reflection (see classroom observation below for some further ideas on this).

As Richards & Farrell (2005) have suggested, a detailed analysis of teaching journals can even show if there are any inconsistencies between teaching beliefs and actual classroom practices.

The point here is that rather than always wondering about what may be occurring in their classroom, teachers now have their own documented thoughts over a period so that they can at least move beyond "feelings" about what may have happened.

In this way also, language teachers can use a teaching journal to explore and examine their beliefs about teaching and learning and compare these to their classroom practices.

2. Classroom observation

Classroom observation is an important aspect of the reflective process because, as Gaies (1991, p. 14) has pointed out, "What we see, when we observe teachers and learners in action, is not the mechanical application of methods and techniques, but rather a reflection of how teachers have interpreted these things."

Individual teachers, pairs, or groups of teachers can observe classes. Individual teachers can record (audio and/or video) themselves teaching and review the recording with a view to getting greater insight into their teaching.

They can link this reflection tool to some issue they may have discovered in their teaching journals and conduct an action research-type cycle of observation of reflections (see sidebar).

The teacher makes changes as a result of the initial steps and then starts the cycle all over again to observe the impact of these decisions.

Of course, this research cycle can include talking to other colleagues about the concern, as they may have some advice to offer.

Pairs of teachers can also team up to discuss teaching in the form of critical friendships (Farrell, 2001). These critical friends can challenge each other in positive ways in a safe environment in such a way that both friends grow as teachers.

The main emphasis here is on the friend rather than on the critical. Groups of teachers can also observe each other's classes.

The cycle of Action Research modeled by Richards & Farrell (2005)

1. **Plan (problem identification): A teacher identifies a problem.**

2. **Research (literature review): The teacher reads about what has been done before about the problem.**

3. **Observe (collecting data): The teacher collects data about the problem—classroom, surveys, and so on.**

4. **Reflect (analysis): The teacher analyzes and reflects on the collected data to make informed decisions about teaching.**

5. **Act (redefining the problem)**

Moving beyond the "bag of tricks approach" with Reflective Practice

Classroom observation should be non-judgmental because making judgments about one another only blocks development.

In this way, language teachers can take more responsibility for the decisions they make in their class- informed decisions, not decisions based on feelings or impulse.

3. Teacher development groups

Group discussions, in which teachers talk to other teachers, are another means for teachers to gather information about their practice and other teachers' practice (Farrell, 2004a).

In this case, teachers come together with the aim of sharing some of their thoughts on teaching and their work. For example, they can share their findings from what they have written in their teaching journals and what they have found from observing their classes.

Alternatively, they can write teaching journals for the group and conduct classroom observations (peer observations) with other group members. This would be especially useful if all members in the group identified a common issue they wanted to investigate further.

The advantage of seeking out other colleagues is that teachers often discover they have had similar experiences, joys, problems, and challenges. By forming a group, they can get moral support, empathy, and even sympathy in some cases, from other like-minded professionals.

They can also see other ways of approaching different issues, such as problem students, introducing new curriculum initiatives, or dealing with the administration.

I think teachers in their first years should make it a priority to seek out other teachers—both experienced and beginning teachers—so that they can avoid the isolation that many teachers tend to endure (some may say suffer) during much of their career.

Conclusion

I agree with Lange (1990, pp. 249-250) who sees an intimate relationship between teacher reflection and teacher development when he says that it gives teachers "the opportunity to examine their relations with students, their values, their abilities, and their successes and failures in a realistic context. It begins the developing teacher's path toward becoming an expert teacher."

However, many teacher education programs, as Good and Brophy (1997) note, have not done a good job of equipping teachers with the skills that are necessary for labelling and analyzing classroom practice.

As such, teachers in TESL Ontario should keep talking to other English language teachers both inside their school, school district and within TESL Ontario so that they can compare their teaching methods to what other teachers are doing.

Maybe it is time for some of these "hardcore" applied linguists I mentioned at the beginning to return to TESL Ontario and provide some guidance for teachers who are eager to pursue professional development — the energy is there, the passion is there, the numbers are there and I would say the will is there.

I am willing to do whatever I can. I have offered three ways in which teachers can embark on (or continue) their reflections and explorations of their teaching so that they will be able (or continue) to make informed decisions in their classroom.

I welcome comments on this article as I make Canada and TESL Ontario my home.

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Ten reflective practices for teachers (Richards and Farrell, 2005):

1. *self-monitoring*

2. *teaching portfolios*

3. *analyzing critical incidents*

4. *case analysis*

5. *peer coaching*

6. *team teaching*

7. *action research*

8. *teaching journals*

9. *classroom observations*

10. *teacher development groups*

Moving beyond the "bag of tricks approach" with Reflective Practice

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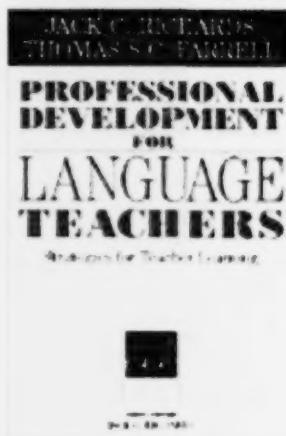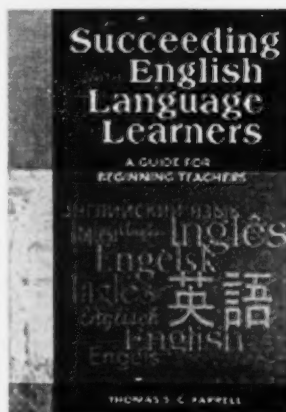
**Two books by
Thomas S. C. Farrell**

References

Looking back, looking forward at language teaching practice: The need to take back the research agenda

By Janna Fox

Janna Fox

When I first started teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in the early 1970's, initially in Mexico and later in Libya, the professionalization of language teaching had not yet occurred.

In fact, the prevailing attitude at the time was, "if you can speak English, you can teach it."

In the absence of recognized language teaching expertise, methods drove instruction.

At that time, grammar translation continued to dominate in most EFL contexts, but there was a notable shift to audio-lingual approaches in some.

During this period, in my own case, as a student I attempted to learn Arabic by patiently repeating Arabic phrases for six months.

As a teacher, I hoped that my students in Madrassa Suq Hedesh in Benghasi would ultimately speak English, if we repeated enough phrases and practiced enough key patterns of the language.

I faithfully followed the Gusbi method (1977) using the prescribed textbook with repetition, substitution and transformation drills; practice dialogues, guided listening, and the control of error. We worked very hard. In the end, however, I did not learn to speak Arabic.

My best student on the day of the final exam with maximal effort was able to string together three of the patterns that we had practiced incessantly during the year in order to ask, "Miss? Yes, I haven't. This is a pencil."

Her jumbled attempt to use what she had learned in my class over that year was a telling moment for me. I resolved to learn more about language learning and teaching.

Returning to Canada with these language experiences behind me, I was amazed to discover the array of new methods that teachers were experimenting with:

- the Silent Way (Gattegno, 1976),

- the Lozanov method/Suggestopedia (Lozanov, 1979),

- Community Language Learning (Curran, 1977),

- Total Physical Response (Asher, 1968),

- Caring and Sharing (Moskowitz, 1978),

- the Functional/Notional Approach (van Ek, 1976).

Each method added something new to the collective, general understanding of language learning and teaching. All were based on research undertaken across a range of disciplines - including psychology, anthropology, sociology and linguistics.

All of these methods "scripted" key language teacher responses to students - just as the audiolingual method had done. Most were codified in textbooks, and textbooks were viewed as the "curriculum" in most contexts.

Historically, research has been viewed by most teachers (language and other) as an activity that is imposed from the outside by outsiders. In language teaching contexts, as noted above, external research typically supported specific methods. In other educational contexts, research supported curricular control and policy implementation.

The view of research as something external to the classroom and imposed on teachers by outsiders may be traced in part to curricular reformers who drew a distinction between curriculum and instruction.

Curricular goals or ends were defined by external educational policy makers - unseen "others," often in Ministries of Education.

These others did not generally visit

"We worked very hard. In the end, however, I did not learn to speak Arabic. "

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the classroom except for formal purposes or events. When they visited, it was generally for purposes of training, inspecting, evaluating or testing.

Within this framework, teachers were perceived as the means for achieving curricular ends through systematic instruction in their classrooms. Research was generally undertaken in relation to external curricular goals, and results frequently criticized teachers for inept or ineffective implementation of those goals in their practices.

The position of the teacher in this ends-means model was clear. It found expression in metaphors such as teacher as "conduit" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1999) or "technician" (i.e., a "Stepford wife" model of teaching).

Research tied to professional development, syllabus design, tests and textbooks was planned with "teacher proofing" in mind.

In the 1970's, the focus on the teacher intensified as Schwab (1970) and others argued that teachers themselves should undertake research - action research - to ensure curricular change.

Becoming researchers within this model, however, did not necessarily alter the ends-means relationship, as teachers often found themselves engaged in research that was set by an external curricular agenda.

Ironically, a consistent finding from this research is that teachers tend to privilege their own students' needs - regardless of the curricular agenda framing their actions. Teachers in general actively adapt and shape external policies in relation to their own students' needs (Sockett, 1976).

Of course, over the intervening years, we have seen the professionalization of language teaching. It has developed into a disciplinary specialization, often housed within departments of Applied Linguistics or Applied Language Studies, with its own certificates, diplomas or degrees; academic and professional journals; associations and conferences. At present, most language teachers have specialist training or post-graduate certification in TEFL/TESL, Master's degrees or doctorates.

With this growth of recognizable expertise, language teachers moved away from methods-driven control of their practice and popularized in print and practice what White (1988) identifies as the progressive model of curriculum, which is characterized by learner-led or learner-centred and interactive approaches to teaching.

This has remained the dominant approach in the field, as research in language acquisition and learning development has empirically demonstrated the unique and idiosyncratic nature of language learning.

Breen (1987) describes this movement from what he refers to as "propositional" (p. 157) models of curriculum (driven by external methods) to "process" (p. 160) models (driven by learner-led pedagogy) in his landmark article on curriculum in language teaching.

At the present, however, nationally and internationally, in both ESL and EFL teaching contexts, language teaching as expertise has been undermined and is marked by tension and conflict. In examining this tension between language teachers' classroom practice, which is variable and responsive to individual needs, and core curriculum with its "one size fits all" approach, it is evident that two very different curricular philosophies are at play.

Platt, Harper, and Mendoza (2003) refer to these as "duelling philosophies" in language classrooms.

For years, the progressive curricular approaches of language teachers were in harmony with the then dominant educational/curricular philosophy, which also tended, to varying degrees, to be progressive. This is no longer the case.

In the past ten years, outcomes-based curricula have become dominant. These curricula define learning in terms of performance and content standards and fixed expectations with regard to learning

"At the present... nationally and internationally, in both ESL and EFL teaching contexts, language teaching as expertise has been undermined and is marked by tension and conflict."

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trajectories that are often based on first language norms.

The trend to outcomes-based curricula is international. It is dominant not only in Ontario, in the United States, and Australia, but also in Great Britain, Hong Kong. New Zealand, etc.

The resulting tension between effective language teaching practice and the dictates of outcomes-based curricula has been noted by language researchers around the world, as is evidenced in this quote from an Australian researcher commenting on language education in Hong Kong:

> There is tension between the philosophical base of the ESL field which emphasizes diversity and complexity, and the demands of the 'mainstream' educational agenda for commonality, simplicity, and homogeneity." (Davison, 2001, p. 29)

Tests, standards and accountability are central to this approach in what is clearly an ends-means model of curriculum.

Within this curricular framework, it is not surprising to find research agendas that attempt to shape, control and direct teachers' variable practice. Standardized tests have been used to hold teachers and schools "accountable" for their students' learning. Results of tests are analyzed by external quality assurance agencies, schools are ranked and their "report cards" widely published in the media.

In the United States, which represents what may be the most extreme version of this approach, dire consequences can result if schools do not perform in accordance with pre-determined outcomes.

In some states, parents are notified that the school is "failing," and urged to move their children to another, better school; principals are fired, control of the school is assumed by the State, and teachers are "re-educated."

The "accountability" agenda has been particularly damaging for English Language Learners (ELLS). Over the past twenty years, immigration policies in Canada have resulted in an increasing proportion of immigrants entering educational systems throughout the country with little or no experience or training in English.

English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD) students are estimated to form 20-50% of the general student population in urban K-12 systems across Canada (Roessingh, 1999).

Ontario secondary schools have seen the greatest increase of ESL/ELD students over the past twenty years. Simultaneously, large-scale achievement testing is increasingly being used to measure and ensure student competency and/or provide system accountability (Jang and Ryan, 2003).

Many ESL/ELD students are struggling or failing to acquire fundamental English literacy skills as evidenced by their low success and high deferral rates on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). These ESL/ELD students are generally provided with extra support for only a short period of time when they begin schooling. Once they are deemed to have achieved basic English literacy skills, they are "mainstreamed."

Much needed long-term follow-up and support is not available to them in most systems. Such support would require additional school expenditures that are not available when funding for education is being restricted or directed toward the development and administration of other initiatives -- such as large scale, high-stakes tests.

The funding for and development of language teaching expertise in Canadian schools (that was a hallmark of educational policies in the 1980's and 1990's) has been systematically withdrawn by subsequent provincial governments.

In Ontario, for example, Blackett (2002) reports that although the number of ESL/ELD students increased by 23% in one

"Many ESL/ELD students are struggling or failing to acquire fundamental English literacy skills as evidenced by their low success and high deferral rates on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test."

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year alone (2001-2002), the number of ESL/ ELD teachers and support programs has declined by 30% over the past five years.

The absence of government funding to develop language teaching expertise has provided justification for Faculties of Education in universities charged with teacher preparation to eliminate or reduce to elective/optional status courses related to teaching ELLs.

The prevailing disregard for language teaching expertise is reminiscent of the 1970's pre-professional era. The new mantra seems to be - "if you teach, you can teach ESL."

Thus, in the absence of specialist language teachers, classroom teachers are routinely provided with workshops designed to help them address the language development needs of their ELL students in their mainstream classrooms - along with all of the other responsibilities that classroom teachers have assumed.

Those of us who have developed an understanding over time of the complexities of language development and language learning recognize the glaring inadequacy of such one-day workshops.

Of course, one unintended consequence of the use of large-scale tests like the OSSLT has been the attention it has drawn to the high dropout rates and the chronic underachievement of ELLs in the schools – an inevitable result of years of insufficiency.

Evidence of the failure of educational systems to meet the needs of ELLs is increasing as longitudinal studies at all levels of the educational system, and across Canada, find alarming levels of failure and attrition amongst second language (L2) learners (see particularly, Fox, 2005; Roessingh, 1999; Siegel and Gunderson, in press).

Looking forward then, there is a clear and pressing need to reassert the important role that language teachers should play in keeping ELLs in school and ensuring they succeed academically.

Research should be used to identify strategic and effective language support. There is insufficient research in the schools at present to determine what approaches succeed and which ones do not.

However, the research agenda must be located in classroom teachers' own perceptions of need arising from their classroom experience.

When research responds to the particular needs that arise from classroom practice, it provides a powerful means for improving the overall quality of teaching and learning (Connolly and Clandinin, 1988; Fullan, 1982; Spillane, 1999; van den Berg, 2003).

Or, as Rosenholtz (1991) put it, "To understand schools, we must understand them as teachers do." (p. 3).

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"...there is a clear and pressing need to reassert the important role that language teachers should play in keeping ELLs in school and ensuring they succeed academically."

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Action Research on Editing ESL Writing: Doing what we've always done

By Julia Macdonald

How to correct student's errors is constantly on the mind of ESL writing teachers.

Many influential studies have found that grammar correction in second language writing is ineffective, but from personal observation and experience, I know that students feel that it is necessary and they expect it.

The question of how much teachers should correct writing and in what form remains unresolved.

The purpose of this Action Research Project was to examine how my students view grammar error correction of their writing, and to reflect on and review my current practices to decide if they could be improved.

The Project

The action research project does not imply that my practices are new, innovative or even desirable. It was implemented to determine whether my own practices are effective, or if, indeed, any of the most used forms of grammar error correction on ESL writing produce the desired result.

The research project focused only on grammar errors; structural errors were not considered in this research, apart from sentence structure errors.

My practice until now has been to correct students' papers by underlining the grammatical errors and providing the correct version. This was done on the first draft of a paper, which was then returned to students who made corrections and submitted a final copy.

Students most often make use of my corrections on their final copies, but seem to make the same errors repeatedly in new writing assignments.

While keeping the current research on explicit grammar correction in writing in mind, I decided I would like my students to take more responsibility for their errors and be more responsive in their corrections.

I was also interested in seeing if a coded correction method would be more effective and instructive than my present correction methods. The action research project included three cycles, described below.

The institution I work for runs an intensive English language program for international students. The setting is within the campus of a medium-sized university in Ontario, Canada.

The school has approximately 200-250 students in any one term, and runs three terms a year, in addition to an array of short programs during the summer.

The school's language teaching focus is English for Academic Purposes to suit the needs of the majority of students. The curriculum, which reflects this focus, is divided into skill areas:

- writing
- reading
- speaking
- listening
- grammar

Students take a one-hour class in each skill area on a daily basis. The school has six levels of competency ranging from preparatory - very low competency - to level five – a level that must be achieved for students to be accepted into degree programs at the university.

The learners in the program are almost all international students who have come to Canada to learn English in an academic setting. Most of the students aspire to go on to become 'regular' students at the university in which the school is located, or at another English speaking university.

Most of the students are between 18 and 30 years old, with relatively few older students. Some of the students have completed at least some university studies in their home country, but many have just graduated from high school.

The majority come from Asia, with China having the largest representation, followed by Korea, Mexico and South America and Japan.

"The question of how much teachers should correct writing and in what form remains unresolved."

Action Research on Editing ESL Writing: Doing what we've always done

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There are also small numbers of students from Europe, other Asian countries, and the Middle East.

The students involved in this Action Research Project were in the highest level (level 5) writing class. All but two of the students aspired to enrol in the university in January as full-time credit-course students.

The class consisted of 20 students:

- 1 Turkish (mature-aged) student
- 1 Saudi-Arabian student
- 3 Japanese students
- 3 Korean students
- 12 Chinese students.

This project required the students to write a series of short (500-word) essays, using various rhetorical structures. These essays form part of the usual curriculum for this type of class.

Review of the Literature

Truscott (1996) argued that explicit grammar correction in second language writing classes has little merit, not only because research has shown it to be ineffective, but also because, in his opinion, it has harmful effects.

He cites research with what he considers inconclusive evidence that grammar correction in students' writing has any effect on their writing ability. He argues that "it made no difference who the students were, how many mistakes were corrected, which mistakes were corrected, how detailed the comments were, or in what form they were presented" (p.330).

Early research on second language writing, which was strongly influenced by research into first language writing, made the assumption that the writing processes in a second language were much the same as in the first language (**Brown 2001**).

Silva (1993), however, argued that there are many differences. He noticed that second language writers do less planning of their writing, are less accurate, and are less effective in stating their goals and in organizing their material.

This hardly seems surprising, but while our understanding of the writing processes of second language learners has developed, our treatment of their errors has not.

While controversy still exists about the teaching methods of writing in a second language, **Brown (2001)** argued that the final product is no longer considered more important than the process. He contended that the Process Approach to writing allows second language learners more autonomy to explore the target language while remaining within the rhetorical style of their culture.

The Process Approach allows students to understand the composition process, and in so doing, expand it to fit the western model of composition.

It would seem that a natural extension of focusing on the process rather than the final product is that minimal correction of the minutiae of the written piece is more desirable than complete correction that leads to a "perfect" paper.

Conversely, **Zamel, (1987)** found that second language writing teachers do in fact focus on their student's writing at the sentence and clause level, rather than on the writing as a whole product. She found that teachers often lose the focus of the main reason for correcting, and may concentrate on small grammatical errors and completely miss large errors in organisation or construction.

Hyland (2000) sought to determine how both peer and teacher feedback affected students' writing, and what the students' perceptions of valid feedback were. She was concerned with developments and research into writing feedback, as well as the social and political implications of giving feedback.

She was especially concerned with the possibility that teachers might overrule students' decisions about their writing and inadvertently misappropriate the students' ideas.

Previously, **Carson and Nelson (1994)** reported that many students were uncomfortable in peer feedback situations because they were reluctant to offer negative feedback to their peers.

Other **studies (Zhang 1995)** reported that many second language students

"...while our understanding of the writing processes of second language learners has developed, our treatment of their errors has not."

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do not act on peer feedback, preferring to rely on teacher feedback, often because they feel that peer feedback ranged from unhelpful to incorrect.

Hyland (2002, p.169) summed up the issue: "The benefits of peer response have been hard to confirm empirically ... particularly in ESL classrooms and many studies have reported that students themselves doubt its value, overwhelmingly preferring teacher feedback".

The dilemma that teachers of second language writing face is not only when and how much should be corrected, but also who should correct or whether it is desirable to correct at all.

The question I formulated to guide this study was this:

If I change the way I now correct students' papers, from explicit correction (providing corrections for all errors) to coded correction (focusing on specific errors):

a) will students learn more from their errors?

b) will the numbers of errors be reduced?

c) will students still feel that their need for feedback is being met?

Methodology

The Action Research (AR) was conducted in three cycles. The procedure differed slightly for each cycle to accommodate the findings of the previous cycle. As each cycle produced its own results, they were analyzed separately.

First Action Research Cycle Plan

The plan for the first cycle of the project was to move away from explicit error correction to a coded correction, in which I would identify errors and, using an annotated code, indicate what kind of error it was.

For example, if an article was left out, I would put an editor's insertion mark called a 'caret', followed by the abbreviation 'art' near the error.

I would also provide students with a chart of the codes I used as a reference. Part of this cycle was to have students write more than one draft of their papers.

My current procedure is to have students write a draft, hand it in to be corrected, incorporate revisions and submit a final, corrected copy.

The AR plan was to have students write a draft, hand it in and have it corrected with codes, do a second draft to be handed in and further corrected with codes before writing a final copy.

Procedure

During the first cycle the class was asked to write a 'cause-and-effect' essay.

I explained the changes in procedure to them, and they seemed quite accepting. They wrote their outlines and began their first draft in class on Monday, and completed the draft for homework.

During the initial writing stages, I was available to assist with any structural, content or format concerns but did not attempt any grammar correction unless a student specifically asked.

Class members handed in their first drafts on Tuesday. I corrected them using the codes and handed the papers back with a copy of the codes, including examples of the kinds of errors that each code identified.

The students were then asked to correct their own papers and hand in a second draft by the end of the week.

I collected the second draft, corrected the errors as I did for the first draft and again handed the papers back. Class members were then asked to provide a final copy for grading.

Observation

The students seemed to struggle with the self-correcting of their errors, and many asked for assistance with their revisions.

∧ **art**

Teacher's error notation for missing article in student writing

"The dilemma that teachers of second language writing face is not only when and how much should be corrected, but also who should correct or whether it is desirable to correct at all."

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This was not something that had happened before.

A couple of their other teachers also reported that students had asked them for assistance with certain corrections, and this was a new and unexpected phenomenon.

Analysis of Data

The first draft was corrected using codes to indicate the errors, but with no explicit suggestion for correction. The grammar errors, summarized below, made in the first draft show where students commonly encountered difficulties:

Table 1: Grammar Errors Identified in First Cycle Compositions—First Draft

Type of error	Times made
Preposition use	153
Word choice	113
Verb tense	33
Verb form	146
Article use	107
Pronoun use	10
Noun ending/noun form	230
Punctuation	46
Spelling	52
Sentence structure	41
Something left out (word or phrase)	113
Words to be combined	5

Second Draft

While the second draft showed some correct alterations, many were still incorrect. Students generally attempted to alter any section of their work where I had indicated there was an error, but often the error remained in a different form.

As shown below, the number of errors in each category decreased, but I was surprised by how small the reduction was.

In addition, in trying to correct their mistakes, the students introduced a new category of error — for example, subject-verb agreement — into the second draft. By adding new text to correct one error, they had created a new error.

The number of errors that remained was still disappointing:

Table 2: Grammar Errors Identified in First Cycle Compositions—Second Draft

Type of error	Times made
Preposition use	122
Word choice	81
Verb tense	10
Verb form	98
Article use	55
Pronoun use	4
Noun ending/noun form	85
Punctuation	35
Spelling	18
Sentence structure	40
Something left out (word or phrase)	103
Words to be combined	0
Subject-verb agreement	1

"Students generally attempted to alter any section of their work where I had indicated there was an error, but often the error remained in a different form."

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Final Copy

The final copies showed improvement, but the papers still contained an unexpected number of errors.

As with the second draft, the students had attempted correction, but often replaced one error with another.

The table below summarizes grammar errors and the total number of instances for each error made for the final draft of the first essay.

Table 3. Grammar Errors Identified in First Cycle Compositions - Final Copy

Type of error	Times made
Preposition use	55
Word choice	41
Verb tense	2
Verb form	31
Article use	25
Pronoun use	0
Noun ending/noun form	26
Punctuation	14
Spelling	6
Sentence structure	16
Something left out (word or phrase)	51
Words to be combined	0
Subject-verb agreement	0

Evaluation

The results of the first cycle were surprising. Perhaps I had overestimated the students' ability to self-edit their work. The numbers of errors decreased considerably, but the final copies were not "perfect".

The results may also have been due to the students' reluctance to correct "yet another" version of their paper.

Previously, I had only required them to write two versions of any written assignment: a first draft and a final copy, which they wrote with pen and paper.

Second Action Research Cycle Plan

The results of the first AR cycle motivated a second cycle. This time I decided to carry out the same procedure as in the first cycle, except that I asked students to choose five of their errors (identified by me with codes) from their first draft and write a correction of each on an error log sheet.

I asked them to choose errors of different kinds, for example an article error, a tense error, a verb ending error or similar and hand the log in with their second draft.

I hoped that this technique might highlight the errors in a more concrete way than the one used in the first cycle.

"The results of the first cycle were surprising. Perhaps I had overestimated the students' ability to self-edit their work."

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Procedure

The students were asked to write another essay, this time using 'compare and contrast' as the rhetorical structure. Again, they planned their outline and began their first draft in class on Monday, and finished the draft for homework.

I collected the papers on Tuesday and corrected them using the same codes. When I handed back the papers, I also included an error-log chart for the students to fill out. On the chart, I asked the students to write five sentences that contained errors and then write a corrected version of each sentence.

The error logs and the second draft of the essays were to be completed by Thursday.

After correcting their drafts, I returned them to the students who incorporated the changes and submitted a final copy of their essays.

Observation

The students seemed more comfortable with this format, although many came to me for clarification of their errors.

Analysis of Data

The students were quite successful in correcting the five errors required for the correction log, but were not as successful in correcting errors of a similar nature in the rest of their essays. Consequently, the results of the error log were promising, but the errors remaining did not markedly change from their papers in the first cycle.

Table 4 is a summary of grammatical errors with the total number of instances for each error made for the first draft of the second essay.

Table 4: Grammar Errors Identified in Second Cycle Compositions—First Draft

Type of error	Times made
Preposition use	162
Word choice	101
Verb tense	41
Verb form	138
Article use	124
Pronoun use	8
Noun ending/ noun form	281
Punctuation	63
Spelling	46
Use of informal/ inappropriate word(s)	2
Sentence structure	47
Something left out (word or phrase)	121
Words to be combined	4
Subject-verb agreement	0

"...the results of the error log were promising, but the errors remaining did not markedly change from their papers in the first cycle."

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Table 5: A summary of the percentage of the five errors successfully corrected.

Type of Error	Per cent of correction achieved
Preposition use	83
Word choice	77
Verb tense	95
Verb form	89
Article use	92
Pronoun use	100
Noun ending/noun form	96
Punctuation	78
Spelling	100
Use of informal/ inappropriate word(s)	100
Sentence structure	98
Something left out (word or phrase)	86
Words to be combined	100
Subject-verb agreement	-

Table 6: Grammar errors with the total number of instances for each error made for the final draft of the second essay.

Type of error	Times made
Preposition use	48
Word choice	45
Verb tense	6
Verb form	25
Article use	31
Pronoun use	1
Noun ending/noun form	40
Punctuation	10
Spelling	2
Use of informal/ inappropriate word(s)	0
Sentence structure	12
Something left out (word or phrase)	42
Words to be combined	0
Subject-verb agreement	0

Evaluation

The students were able to identify and correct the five errors required for their error log, often with assistance from me or other teachers, but seemed unable to extend that knowledge to similar errors in their essays.

As a result, the number of errors remaining on the second draft of their papers was not significantly different from the numbers on the second draft of their essays in the first cycle. Again, the results were not as good as I had hoped.

The students struggled with their

> *"The students were able to identify and correct the five errors required for their error log... but seemed unable to extend that knowledge to similar errors..."*

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errors and did not seem to have the tools to correct their own errors.

Third Action Research Cycle Plan

I decided on a third cycle of the AR project. For this cycle, I followed the implementation procedures of the second cycle, but with two alterations. I planned to:

(a) abandon the error log and the second draft, and

(b) have the students work on their corrections of the first draft during class time to enable them to receive peer as well as teacher feedback.

Procedure

The students were asked to write a third essay using 'process' as their rhetorical structure.

The same timetable as the first two cycles was used except that after I handed back the code-corrected first draft of the paper, the students and I worked together on the corrections for the final copy over the next two lesson periods in class.

The students circulated to ask for assistance as required. Following these classes, I again collected and corrected the essays.

Observation

The students were markedly more comfortable with this arrangement and the results were more positive. While many of the students approached me for clarification of their errors, many also sought help from their fellow students.

Analysis of Data

The overall occurrence of errors in the students' writing dropped, but further research is needed to determine whether this was due to natural language development over the course of the term, or if the changes in error correction techniques played any part in it.

Although the final essay, a 'process' style essay, involved a less demanding rhetorical structure than either a 'compare and

contrast' or a 'cause and effect' essay, it was not rhetorical structure I was examining but errors made in the writing; therefore, I considered that it was not inappropriate to set the "easier" rhetorical structure last.

One consideration for this was to try to avoid "essay fatigue" so often experienced by students towards the end of a term.

When the correction of the first draft took place in class during the third AR cycle, the students became motivated - maybe because they didn't have to write a second draft - and were very cooperative in looking at each other's errors and making suggestions.

Ultimately, they still came to me to have their corrections verified.

Table 7: Grammar Errors Identified in Third Cycle Composition - First Draft

Type of error	Times made
Preposition use	123
Word choice	81
Verb tense	35
Verb form	101
Article use	115
Pronoun use	0
Noun ending/noun form	140
Punctuation	60
Spelling	34
Use of informal/inappropriate word(s)	0
Sentence structure	50
Something left out (word or phrase)	111
Words to be combined	1
Subject-verb agreement	0

"The overall occurrence of errors in the students' writing dropped"

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Table 8: A summary of grammar errors with the total number of instances for each error made for the final draft of the third essay

Type of error	Per cent correction achieved
Preposition use	95
Word choice	93
Verb tense	92
Verb form	89
Article use	91
Pronoun use	-
Noun ending/noun form	88
Punctuation	87
Spelling	100
Use of informal/ inappropriate word(s)	-
Sentence structure	89
Something left out (word or phrase)	79
Words to be combined	100
Subject-verb agreement	-

Evaluation

The students often asked me to verify the suggestions made by their peers, in this way reinforcing Hyland's (2002) assertion that in the end students tend to trust the assistance they receive from a teacher over that of a peer.

I conducted an informal survey of the students to find out what they thought of the corrections I had been providing, and they overwhelmingly agreed that they were most comfortable with the process used in the third cycle.

This may be due to several factors. The students were relieved of the burden of writing a second draft and of doing the error log, but it may also be due to a sense of reassurance they felt at having me available to assist with their errors.

All of the students expressed more concern for grammatical accuracy than for structural coherence, and they saw their grammar errors as flaws in their writing and something of concern.

Conclusion

The improvement the students made in their writing is encouraging, perhaps despite my attempts to provide meaningful correction.

The course of this Action Research has shown me, in numbers, that my students' ability in editing their English texts did in fact improve. I had assumed or hoped this would happen but had not seen concrete evidence of it.

The AR also highlighted the dichotomy between the process approach, (concentrating on the process rather than the final product in writing that is espoused in language teaching theory) and the perceptions second language learners have of what constitutes a "good" piece of writing.

However, for teachers, the dilemma remains: at what point is a student's writing good enough? When it is comprehensible, or when it is "perfect"?

In attempting to answer these questions, the student must also be taken into account. Although many studies have shown that correction of grammar errors is ineffective — and the results of this research would seem to support that view — this and other studies have also demonstrated that students do value feedback on their work, and most often actively seek it out.

Perhaps this perception on the part of students (that error correction and feedback are valuable) is the key to the purpose of feedback.

"...students do value feedback on their work, and most often actively seek it out."

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If students find it useful, then perhaps it is, not because it improves their ability in the second language, but because it affirms their purpose.

In terms of my own practices, I continue to correct my students' writing, though this research has made me more acutely aware of my students' insecurities in their written work.

I now encourage them to have more independence in their self-editing, and I no longer correct all their errors. If a student repeatedly makes the same error, I now direct the student to that error and encourage him or her to seek a solution without my interference.

I hope by pursuing this method, I will encourage more autonomy and confidence in my students, but that is the basis of another action research project.

Julia Macdonald is the Writing Coordinator in Brock University's Intensive English Language Program. •

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References

Schools in Profile:

Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute

By Cathy Haghighat

**Marc Garneau
Collegiate Institute**

Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute

135 Overlea Boulevard
Don Mills, Ontario M3C 1B3
Tel: (416) 396-2410

- Located 2 blocks south of the Ontario Science Centre, Overlea Boulevard at Don Mills Ave.

- http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/marcgarneau/

- Principal: Clara Williams

- Total number of students: 1,978 - 2,000

- Structure: Semestered school, Grades 9 to 12, 1 principal, 3 Vice-principals, 5 guidance counsellors, 135 teaching staff, 2 hall monitors, 3 teaching aides, 2 youth and child care workers, 1 social worker, 1 settlement worker, a day care centre, 4 portables and a large summer school program (1,700)

- Status: Closed

- Gender: Female - 48% Male - 52%

- Primary language other than English: 80%

- Major Community Languages: (53 identified languages)

>   Urdu - 24%
>   English - 20%
>   Tamil - 9%
>   Persian - 9% (Dari - 5 %; Farsi - 4%)
>   Gujarati - 5%
>   Bengali - 4%
>   Hindi - 2%
>   Mandarin - 2%
>   Punjabi - 2%
>   Russian - 2%

- The bulk of the population comes from South-East Asia, with 65% of the population being Muslim. Most students are ESL or first generation Canadian. Fewer than 20% speak English at home.

- Students born outside Canada:

>   Students living in Canada for 2 years or less: 18%
>
>   Students living in Canada for 3 - 5 years: 25%

Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute is a Toronto District School Board (TDSB) high school, located in the former borough of East York.

Opened as Overlea Secondary School in 1966 with an open plan for classrooms, the school was later renovated and given a new orientation to house an enriched Math, Science and English program (TOPS – Talented Offerings for Programs in the Sciences) in addition to the Canadian Space Resource Centre.

It was reopened as Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute by Dr. Marc Garneau in October, 1997. He still visits the school from time to time to speak to the students.

Garneau is said to be the most multicultural school in North America. The community is very diverse and highly educated.

A series of articles on the Thorncliffe community in the Globe and Mail recently noted that it had the most PhDs per capita in the nation. The area has many condo complexes that were purchased for investment and then rented out to immigrant families. Often two or three families share living space while they save up to find a place of their own. The financial resources of the community tend to be quite low.

Garneau is a "closed school" which means that only students who live within its boundaries can enrol. This makes it truly a community-based school, with older students dropping younger siblings off at its 'feeder schools'. Valley Park Middle School and Thorncliffe Park Elementary School.

Garneau does offer 3 board-wide programs: TOPS, LEAP and Special Education classes that draw students from all over the TDSB board; TOPS also draws students from the surrounding boards. Garneau's Learning Enrichment Academic Program (LEAP) is for age-appropriate students, ages 14 to 16, who have had little or no education before arriving in Canada.

They receive intensive ESL and math, as well as an orientation to the school setting and school routines.

The majority of our LEAP students are from Afghanistan. Garneau's Talented Offerings for Programs in the Sciences (TOPS), a math, science, technology and English-enriched program, requires an entrance exam for Grade 8 students.

"Garneau is said to be the most multicultural school in North America."

Schools in Profile:

Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute

(Continued from page 31)

Canadian Space Resource Centre at Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute

Approximately 80 candidates are chosen to register in the program. It received kudos from *Maclean's* magazine (August 23, 2004) as the "best in the nation for science and math".

Garneau also has a variety of special education programs for students with exceptionalities: i.e., behavioural, communication, intellectual, physical and multiple learning disabilities.

The ESL program is rather large, with about 300 ESL students and 5.5 full time ESL teachers. ESL and ESD classes are offered at 5 levels.

The school also offers ESL sheltered classes for geography, math, science, civics, career studies, history, business computers, drama and healthy cooking. These classes are offered at the Grade 9 and 10 levels. In all other classes and grade levels, ESL learners are integrated into the regular classroom.

Garneau C.I. received kudos from Maclean's magazine as the "best in the nation for science and math"

Programs available	
• Remedial Literacy	• Remedial Math
• First Language Mentors	• Peer Tutoring
• Tutors in the classroom	• Homework Club
• Student Ambassadors (students greet new students/families)	• Conflict Management
• Welcome (an orientation Program)	• Leadership Program Breakfast
• Newcomer Settlement for New Canadians	• *Bridges* - for at risk students, targeting Grades 7, 8 and 9
• Parenting Programs/Courses	• Peer Mediation

Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute

Many of the ESL students take advantage of Garneau's CO-OP program with an eye to entering the apprenticeship pathways through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programme (OYAP).

The areas that have attracted many of our ESL students are the chef training classes, auto mechanics and IT (offered in partnership with Canadore College).

In support of ESL learners, Garneau's librarian, Ms. Whyte, has stocked a wide range of materials for the ESL learners. The White Pine Reading Club is very popular with them.

Garneau's Guidance department continues to do outreach to ESL families by visiting local LINC and Adult ESL classes, presenting information on the high school system and the expectations of high school. Information is also provided on college, university and apprenticeship programs.

A social worker from Oolagen (Children's Mental Health Agency), two youth and child care workers and a settlement worker are also on site.

Students participate in many national mathematics and science contests. All of the above programs are complemented by an active extra-curricular program, with a variety of sports teams, service clubs, music and drama groups, chess club, to name a few.

Garneau has advisors and committee members on the Thorncliffe Community Association and the Flemingdon Neighbourhood Community Association as well as the Red Apple Day Care Centre, integrated into the building.

The local Rotary Club and Kiwanis Club also have close links to the school. Over 200 students join the Key Club, an in-school service club that serves the community. The school is renowned for its community participation and commitment.

Assessment/Placement

Garneau's ESL students, along with their younger siblings, are sent to Greenwood Assessment Centre when they arrive for assessment in Math and English.

An interview with an assessor and/or translator provides information on their previous educational background as well as suggested placements for ESL and math. Students then return with their assessment packages to be enrolled by a counsellor, assisted by a translator or the settlement worker, if needed.

Previous high school experience

Students with previous high school records from overseas are granted equivalency credits after a semester and a half.

Their documents, their age, their success and level placement at Garneau, and the information provided in the Greenwood assessment help to determine the number of credits they are awarded.

Credits are awarded by Grade rather than subject area. For example, if a 15-year-old student is placed in Grade 10, with ESL support, and if the student does well in Grade 10, s/he will most likely be awarded eight credits, a Grade 9 year including compulsory credits such as French.

If a student has no documents, his/her age, academic success over the school year and the initial assessment are used to determine the number of credits awarded.

The maximum number of credits awarded is 24 (student has provided the equivalent of a high school diploma). The six missing credits for a diploma will include senior English credits (Grade 11 and 12) and usually a Group 1 credit (choice of 5th English course, 3rd language, senior level geography or history course, or a humanities coded class which includes cooking).

Challenges

1. Age-appropriate placement in high school

This is a daunting task as there is a race against time to grant students a high school diploma so that they will be able to continue their post-secondary studies with the level of high school skills necessary. The difficulty is compounded when the students have no educational background to draw upon.

"Marc Garneau is the best composite school in the country. Our students seem to recognize that it takes personalities from all levels, all interests, all aspirations to make the mechanism that is "society" work as well as it does. Our students work in teams along side our staff in a multitude of co-curricular activities, learning valuable skills as they navigate their way through high school into post secondary settings or the demands of the world of work."
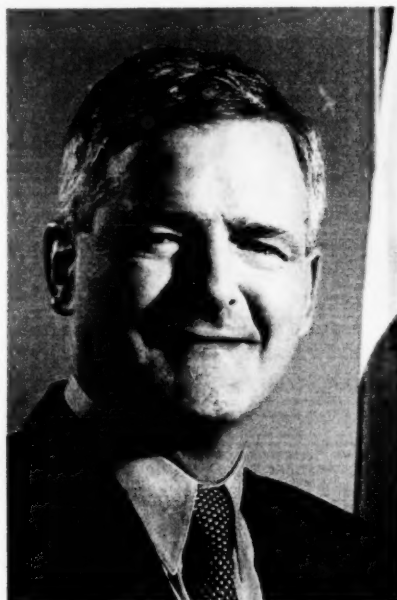
-principal Clara Williams

Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute

(Continued from page 33)

Dr. Marc Garneau

4. Space

Garneau's greatest challenge lies in physical space. Four portables and three lunch periods still leave the master time-tabler with the challenging task of placing all students in classrooms that are not over-crowded.

Garneau was renovated to accommodate from 1,300 to 1,500 students; yet, even with its closed status, it is often 300 to 500 over the targeted enrolment.

Triumphs

Garneau is alive with language and energy. It is not uncommon for its students to be multilingual; they walk through the halls, greeting and conversing with 3 or 4 other students or staff members in different languages.

The school is a true example of multiculturalism at its best, with students from a myriad of religions, cultures and nations, working together in harmony for the betterment of themselves and of others. Despite the challenges, students, staff and the community strive for a common goal — the best interests of all students. •

2. Age

Some students arrive aged 18 or 19, with little or no English, and are assessed as being at the Grade 8 or 9 level, making it difficult to place such students in grade and age-appropriate classes.

Also, it can be difficult to convince students (and their family) who have completed high school or even a year of post secondary schooling overseas, but have little or no English, that LINC or adult ESL classes are more appropriate preparation for them to continue their education once they have acquired English.

Many falsely believe that they will not be able to continue their studies by following the alternative route unless they have first obtained a Canadian high school diploma.

3. Future careers

It can be hard to educate families about alternative pathways to careers besides medicine and engineering.

"It is not uncommon for Garneau students to be multilingual; they walk through the halls, greeting and conversing with 3 or 4 other students or staff members in different languages."

Schools in profile: Marc Garneau C.I. feeder:

Valley Park Middle School

Valley Park Middle School

130 Overlea Boulevard
(across the street from Garneau)
Toronto, ON M3C 1B2
416-396-2465
Fax : (416) 396-2902

- Principal: John Kuropatwa

- Total number of students: 1,010

- Structure: Grades 6 to 8, 1 principal, 2 Vice principals

- Status: Closed

- Gender: Female - 50% Male - 50%

- Primary language other than English: 81%

- Major Languages:

    Urdu
    Tamil
    Persian
    Gujarati
    Bengali
    Hindi
    Punjabi

- More than 40 languages are represented.

- The bulk of the population comes from South-East Asia, with the majority of the population being Muslim. Most students are ESL or first-generation Canadian. Fewer than 19% speak English at home.

- Students born outside of Canada:

    Students living in Canada for 2 years or less: 19%

    Students living in Canada for 3 - 5 years: 24%

Valley Park has just completed a large expansion and renovation. The school now has more than 60 teaching spaces with upgraded facilities, a new library, and re-configured classrooms. It serves the communities of Thorncliffe and Flemingdon.

Valley Park promotes two school wide/cross-curricular programs:

1. Three R's:

- Be Responsible
- Be Respectful
- Be Reasonable

2. Student leadership:

Leadership is encouraged through the Student Council, Prefects, House Captains, Builders' Club, Flemingdon Leadership Club, and the Moorelands Community Leadership Program. Valley Park has also done well in contests such as public speaking and Math, and has an award-winning choir. •

"The bulk of the population comes from South-East Asia, with the majority of the population being Muslim."

Programs Offered at Valley Park

•ESL classes	•Bilingual story books/ videos in library
•ESL Resource	•Computer literacy
•LEAP	•Keyboarding instruction
•Special Education	
•Adult volunteers: Reading	•Enrichment Program: Math
•Balanced Literacy	•Homework Club
•Book Fair(s)	•Heritage months
•First Steps: Reading, Writing	•International Language classes
•Storytelling workshops (adult storytellers interacting with students)	•Folk dancing: Folkfest (folk dancing)
	•Prefect
•Peer tutors	•Student recognition assemblies
•ESL support	•Values, Influences, and Peers (V.I.P.)
•S.E.P.T. - Settlement and Education Partnerships in Toronto (Settlement workers assist newly-arrived families)	•Terry Fox Run
	•Secondary CO-OP students
	•Anti-bullying
	•Leadership

Parental Links	Community Links
•International Language Program •Day School Volunteer Program •After-Four Programs	•Diversity celebrations •Equity committee •Daily Breakfast •Daily Lunch •Drama/Dance projects: choir(s) •Folk dancing: Folkfest (folk dancing

Thorncliffe Park Elementary School

Thorncliffe Park Elementary School

80 Thorncliffe Park Drive
(2 blocks west of Garneau)
Toronto, ON M4H 1K3
416-396-2460
Fax: (416) 396-2286

- Principal: Sue Pfeffer

- Total number of students: 1,470: JK to Grade 3 - 1,092; Grades 4 and 5 - 377

- Structure: Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5, 1 principal, 3 Vice principals

- Status: Closed

- Gender: Female - 50% Male - 50%

- Primary language other than English: 90%

- Major Languages:

  Urdu
  Tamil
  Persian
  Gujarati
  Bengali
  Hindi
  Punjabi

- The bulk of the population comes from South-East Asia, with the majority of the population being Muslim. Most students are ESL or first-generation Canadian. Fewer than 10% speak English at home.

- Students born outside of Canada: 47 countries are represented.

  Students living in Canada for 2 years or less: 24%

  Students living in Canada for 3 - 5 years: 26%

Thorncliffe Park Elementary School is a TDSB elementary school, located in the former East York.

It too belongs to the Thorncliffe Park community. Ninety-seven per cent of the students live in the high-rise apartment buildings surrounding the school on three sides.

It is said to be the largest elementary school in North America, often with as many as 15 junior and senior kindergarten classes. It was originally built in 1961 but has undergone several renovations since then to accommodate the increased population.

A massive addition was officially opened on October 23, 2003. Part of the new addition includes an area to develop the large muscles and an exercise/play courtyard for Kindergarten students, 3 gymnasiums, a technologically advanced library with indoor/outdoor theatre, several enclosed outdoor courtyards with gardens for hands-on environmental studies, and a beautifully landscaped outdoor sports and recreation area.

Parental Links	Community Links
•Day school volunteer Program •After-Four Program •International Language Program	•Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office •On-site settlement worker •LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) •Thorncliffe Public Library •Jenner Jean-Marie Community Centre; Moorelands; literacy partnership with Coca-Cola Ltd., Thorncliffe Preschool and School-age Daycare •CAP - Community Access Program •Partnerships with Marc Garneau CI. (CO-OP students) •Joint programming and activities with 53 Division, Toronto Police Service •East York Town Centre, Community •Access Program and Computers

Thorncliffe Park is said to be the largest elementary school in North America

Schools in profile: Marc Garneau C.I. feeder:

Thorncliffe Park Elementary School

(Continued from page 36)

Thorncliffe Park Elementary School	
•ESL integrated in-class support •ESL Resource •LEAP •Reception class •S.E.P.T. •Translations, translators •Multilingual resources (translators, peer tutors, informational material) •English Literacy Development •Math resource •Balanced Literacy •Adult volunteers: Reading •Daily independent reading •Developmental Reading Assessment •Early Intervention •Early Years Literacy Project •First Steps: Reading, Writing •Second Step •Guest Author (guests from all walks of life read to learners) •Guided Reading •Home Reading •Jolly Phonics •Literacy resource (remedial support from Resource Teachers) •Reading Buddies (with students from other grades)	•Reading Recovery •Special education •Remedial support from Resource Teachers •Secondary CO-OP students, as classroom aides •Wiggleworks (computer-based early literacy Program) •CO-OP students •Parent volunteers •Peace Builders •Literacy and numeracy skills •Support and enrichment through teaching specialists in physical education, music, computer education, library research skills development, guidance/student services •Breakfast •Interest groups/clubs: Folkfest (folk dancing) •After-4 •International Language classes •support for literacy, safe schools, and citizenship: •Festival of Knowledge •I.O.D.E. Book Breakfast •Share the Stories with Coca-Cola Ltd. •Moorelands After School Program •Martin Luther King Jr. Day Event •International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Community Walk, both hosted by Toronto Police Service 53 Division

Information for these profiles was gathered from the TDSB website and school profiles, based on the 2004-05 school year. Additional information was provided by secretarial staff, ESL department members and the principal at Garneau.

Cathy Haghighat, guidance counsellor at Marc Garneau CI, was formerly ESL head and Program Team Leader of Languages and Communications at Bathurst Heights SS. •

97 per cent of the students live in the high-rise apartment buildings surrounding the school on three sides.

Book review:

God on the Quad

By Robert Courchêne

The overthrow of the Shah of Iran with the concomitant election of an Islamic government, the rise of the evangelical movement and the religious right, and 9/11 and its aftermath have all contributed to the renewed importance of the role of religion in our society.

Despite the *de facto* separation of church and state in the U.S. and Canada, the mention of God and religion are common themes in the speeches of President Bush and, increasingly in those of religious and political leaders, especially on the right, in Canada.

In her book, *God on the Quad*, Schaefer Riley examines the state of religious colleges and universities (with an enrolment of 1.3 million students) and the role they play in American society.

To do so, she visited twenty Christian and Jewish institutions across the U.S., running the spectrum of religious faiths and degrees of conservatism: from Brigham Young and Bob Jones Universities, to Notre Dame, Wheaton, Ave Maria School of Law, Baylor and Yeshiva.

She was attracted to this issue because "The most important question about the recent growth of religious higher education for observers of American culture and political life is whether this movement tends to make religious communities more insular; whether this missionary generation, as its leaders hope, will transform the broader, secular society from within; or whether those hopes are bound to be dashed by the influence of secularism on these young men and women." (pp.9 -10)

In reporting on her year-long study, Schaefer Riley groups her findings around four key issues:

- the reasons students enrolled in religious schools

- the curricula at both religious and secular institutions

- life outside the classroom (sex, drugs, dating, lodging, race, campus protests, missionary work)

- the impact of a religious-based education on acceptance at graduate school.

Contrary to the often heard stereotype that religious colleges are filled with the intellectually challenged who have no interest in modern culture and society, Schaefer Riley found that students at religious institutions have for the most part chosen to be there and often possess superior academic ability.

Moreover, parental influence is not an important factor in their decision to attend such colleges.

Many are also high academic achievers who were schooled in non-Christian high schools— the exception being the large number of home-schooled children who attend Thomas Aquinas College, a conservative Catholic institution. All these students see their religious beliefs playing an important role in their present and future lives.

Curricula vary greatly across these religious institutions, from the almost secular at the Jesuit-controlled Fordham University to more fundamentalist faith-based programs at the smaller colleges.

All of the institutions discussed struggle with the dilemma of strengthening the religious beliefs of their students (the

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>
> Introduction to *God on the Quad*
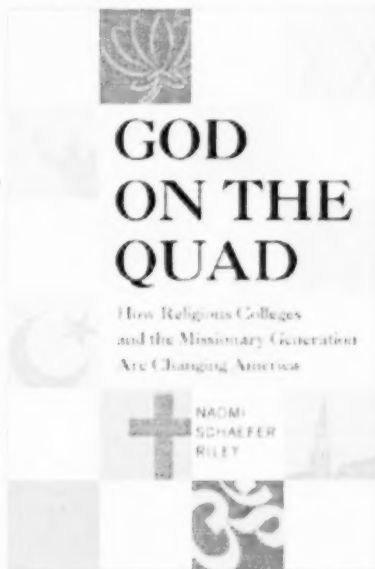
God on the Quad

raison d'être of such institutions) while providing them with an education that will enhance their chances to get into graduate school.

To ensure a proper religious orientation in the curricula, most of the institutions require students to agree to follow the school's religious principles before being admitted and faculty must do the same before being hired. Surprisingly, as Schaefer Riley points out, this requirement is less and less of an issue in such post-secondary institutions when it comes to recruiting distinguished faculty.

What most distinguishes the institutions in the study are the out-of-class patterns of their students. In general, compared with their peers in non-religious institutions, they spend more time studying, are better prepared for class, watch less TV (actually banned in some colleges), read fewer newspapers, are involved in fewer protests, vote Republican (with a higher rate of participation), do more service/missionary work, engage in no (or very little) pre-marital sex, marry younger and are generally more conservative.

Surprisingly, most want to settle and work in the more secular blue (Democratic) areas of the U.S., and seek work in areas across the employment spectrum. Schaefer Riley points out that the students' conservative views make them very attractive to employers as they come with high ethical standards, a heightened sense of what is acceptable in different work contexts and a commitment to the company and its goals.

When she looked at their admission to graduate schools, Schaefer Riley found that the students had noticeable levels of success. A number of the religious institutions studied are in the top 25 in the U.S., both in the number of students admitted to graduate schools and those receiving Ph..Ds. The integration of religious and secular studies in their curricula (there are exceptions) has apparently enabled them to graduate with a more "inclusive" education.

In reporting her findings, Schaefer Riley also discusses these institutions' positions on homosexuality, all forms of media, academic freedom and attitudes towards members of other faiths.

In writing *God on the Quad* she has provided us with a balanced overview of the religious environment found in religious colleges across the U.S. In the process, she has questioned and clarified a number of stereotypes of what she calls the "missionary generation".

Concerning the growth of religious schools in Ontario and across Canada, the author has also identified a number of issues important for Canadians: Should faith-based schools receive public support? If so, should the funding body have input into the curriculum? Should faith-based schools be required to teach about all religions? Should they be open to all who agree to follow the precepts of their faith and their code of honour? Can the graduates of these schools retain their faith and integrate into Canadian society?

This thought-provoking and even-handed overview of religious schools will be an enjoyable read for a broad range of individuals: academics, parents, teachers, administrators, and the curious-minded. •

Naomi Schaefer Riley.
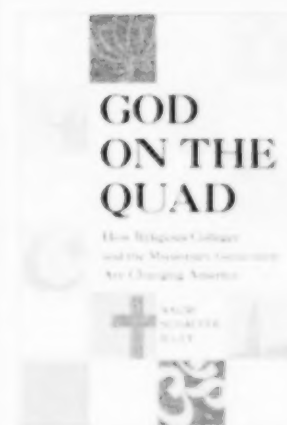
Schaefer Riley, Naomi (2005). God on the Quad. New York. St. Martin's Press. Pp. 274. C$35.95 (Hardcover)

Board of Directors

PRESIDENT:

Sharon Rajabi has been in the field of ESL/EFL as instructor, trainer, curriculum developer, and administrator for over twenty years. She currently works for the Toronto Catholic District School Board as a Program Consultant.

Sharon has served as the Research and Technology Chair at the TESL Ontario Executive Board for the past four years and as Technology Fair Chair since 1999. She has also acted as Conference Chair and Research Symposia Co-Chair at TESL Ontario Conferences.

Sharon has presented frequently at the TESL affiliate organizations as well as TESL Ontario, TESL Canada, and TESOL.

Sharon Rajabi, President

SECRETARY-TREASURER:

Namita Aggarwal works as a Program Manager in Continuing Education at the Toronto District School Board, after holding an earlier position as ESL Manager for the West Region. She is currently responsible for the budget, including Ministry Funding submissions for all Continuing Education programs.

She began her career in ESL with the Etobicoke Board of Education in 1990. She has taught a variety of levels including computer and employment skills.

As a Lead Teacher, Namita actively participated on Action Teams including Professionalism and Hiring. She also chair-ed the Accountability Committee.

She co-authored documents on placement testing, quality standards, statistical data collection, instructor self-evaluation, volunteer training and was a member of the writing team that critiqued the first draft of the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

She is a member of the CESBA Conference Planning Committee and has presented at both the CESBA and CESBA-Mini ESL conferences on Ministry funding and accountability.

Namita's roots are in ESL and she appreciates being able to contribute through participation in TESL Ontario.

Namita Aggarwal, Secretary-Treasurer

CERTIFICATE CHAIR:

Sheila Nicholas is currently the ESL and LINC Coordinator for the Wellington Centre for Continuing Education, Upper Grand District School Board. She has been working in the field of ESL for 16 years.

Sheila Nicholas, Certification Chair

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Cathy Haghighat is a guidance counsellor at Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute, Toronto District School Board. She has taught adult and adolescent ESL and guidance since 1979 in both Continuing Education and Credit programs.

She has served on the TESL Toronto board for 19 years as affiliate director and membership secretary (current position).

She was the author of the column "Language Profiles" for *Contact* for a number of years; these profiles have now been published in book form as *Language Profiles*, volumes I to III. •

Cathy Haghighat, Membership Secretary

TESL ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MARCH 31, 2005

Julius L. Rédly
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT
79 Truman Road
North York, Ontario; M2L 2L7
Telephone (416) 443-0990 * Fax (416) 447-2410

AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the members of
TESL Association of Ontario

I have audited the statement of financial position of TESL Association of Ontario as at March 31, 2005 and the statement of operations and net assets for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the association's management. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements.

I conducted an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatements. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In common with many non-profit organizations, TESL Association of Ontario derives part of its revenue contributions from the general public in the form of project administrations, membership fees, certification fees, conferences and meetings, which are not susceptible to complete audit verification. Accordingly, my examination was limited to the examination of banking transactions for those activities for the year ended March 31, 2005.

In my opinion, except for the effect of the adjustments, if any, had project administrations, membership fees, certification fees, newsletters, conferences and meetings been susceptible to complete audit verification, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association as at March 31, 2005 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

TORONTO, CANADA
July 5, 2005

Chartered Accountant

TESL ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Incorporated without share capital under the Laws of the
Province of Ontario as a non-profit organization.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT MARCH 31, 2005

(with comparative figures as at March 31, 2004)

ASSETS

Current	2005	2004
Cash on hand and in bank	$ 72,626	$ 118,121
Term deposits-including accrued interest	334,571	259,095
Accounts receivable	38,365	37,896
Prepaid expenses	7,871	5,000
Total assets	**$ 453,433**	**$ 420,112**

LIABILITIES

Current	2005	2004
Accounts payable and accrued charges	$ 53,503	$ 45,101
Revenue received in advance	10,618	_
Total liabilities	**$ 64,121**	**$ 45,101**

NET ASSETS

	2005	2004
Per attached -see page 3	389,312	375,011
	$ 453,433	**$ 420,112**

The attached notes form an integral part of these financial statements!

Approved:_____ _____ _____

TESL ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND NET ASSETS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2005

(with comparative figures for the year ended March 31, 2004)

	2005	2004
Revenue		
Contributions		
Projects - per page 4	$ 359,981	$ 340,041
Membership fees	241,742	239,047
Certification fees	21,654	17,133
Others	4,332	4,535
Affiliates' mini conferences	42,715	38,970
Interest	2,048	11,956
Total revenue	**$ 672,472**	**$ 651,682**
Expenses		
Annual TESL Ontario Conference - per page 5	$ 162,117	$ 158,756
Affiliates' mini-conferences - per page 5	50,681	49,570
Certification costs	11,689	9.662
Other project expenses	63,169	67,068
Salaries and employee benefits	146,729	140,264
Rent, telephone and utilities	24,406	24,709
Memberships and affiliation expenses	57,603	58,205
Contact newsletter	6,347	8,462
Meeting expenses	32,883	20,138
Computer and equipment purchase/rental	21,269	9,793
Stationery, supplies, postage and couriers	14,806	13,204
Website costs	18,485	12,457
Office and general	47,987	27,264
Total expenses	$ 658,171	$ 599,552
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	$ 14,301	$ 52,130
Net assets - opening balance	375,011	322,881
- closing balance	**$ 389,312**	**$ 375,011**

TESL ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

SCHEDULE OF PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2005

(with comparative figures for the year ended March 31, 2004)

	2005	2004
Project contributions:		
Annual TESL Ontario Conference		
Registration and publishers	$ 123,664	$ 99,109
Citizenship and Immigration Canada		
LINC – Conference Assistance	144,106	158,334
– Research symposium	32,772	34,886
	$ 300,542	$ 292,329
Ministry of Citizenship		
Pay Equity Program	9,259	9,259
Ministry of Education		
Research Symposium	5,000	5,000
Citizenship and Immigration Canada		
LINC – UP (SNAP)	23,040	16,023
ORLAC	22,140	17,430
	$ 359,981	**$ 340,041**

TESL ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

SCHEDULE OF CONFERENCE EXPENSES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2005

(with comparative figures for the year ended March 31, 2004)

	2005	2004
Annual TESL Ontario Conference		
Planners' fees	$ 28,363	$ 29,771
Conference Assistance		
- registrants' travel and accommodation	56,217	55,156
Printing, supplies and miscellaneous	26,896	19,466
Rentals	50,641	54,363
	$ 162,117	$ 158,756
Affiliate mini-conferences		
Honoraria and salaries	9,851	$ 9,328
Printing, supplies and miscellaneous	15,489	11,179
Meeting expenses	25,341	29,063
	$ 50,681	$ 49,570

TESL ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MARCH 31, 2005

1. TESL Association of Ontario was established in 1972 as a not-for-profit organization serving the needs of teachers of English as a Second Language. In its commitment to professional development and advocacy, TESL Association of Ontario addresses the range of competencies, experiences and issues which influence the success of immigrants, refugees, visa students and others who learn English.

2.a. Significant accounting policies:

   TESL Association of Ontario uses the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable. Interest income is recognized as earned, based on the accrual method.

   b. Capital assets are expensed as purchased.

3. These financial statements include the revenues and expenses of the following Affiliates:

Durham	Hamilton-Wentworth
Kingston	London
Niagara	North York-York Region
Ottawa	Peel/Halton/Etobicoke
Sudbury	Waterloo-Wellington
Toronto	Windsor

4. No statement of cash flows is presented as it would not add to the disclosure of these financial statements.

5. TESL Association of Ontario is exempt from income taxes due to its not-for-profit status under the Income Tax Act.

6. TESL Association of Ontario has entered into a new five-year lease, commencing April 1, 2005, paying a monthly rent of $ 3,150 plus occupancy cost.

7. The operations of TESL Association of Ontario is dependent on the income generated by the project revenues as provided by various Government agencies as well as on membership and certification fees.